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## ABSTRACT

Prepared for use by staff in development workshops at Burlington County College (BCC), in New Jersey, this handbook offers college-wide guidelines for improving the quality of service provided to internal and external customers, and reviews key elements of BCC's Customer Service System (CSS), a computerized method of recording and following-up on complaints. Following introductory materials, the purpose of the workshop theme, "Managing Customer Concerns," is described as supporting a professional service environment by increasing knowledge about college-wide procedures and examining a dynamic customer service process. Next, key terms in the process are defined, including "receiver," or the individual receiving a customer's inquiry; "owner area," or the place where individuals charged with providing information and assistance are located; and "owner," or the first administrator in line in the owner area. Receiver and owner tasks in a customer inquiry are then delineated and a process model is presented for dealing with customer inquiries or complaints. Next, a review is provided of guidelines and procedures related to in-person and telephone customer relations skills; issues related to student confidentiality; and such special cases as complaints related to racial and sexual harassment and assisting disabled students. Finally, issues concerning the use of the CSS are reviewed, including definitions of terms, the need for sensitivity in creating CSS records, access to the system, and system commands. A CSS records format is appended. (KP)

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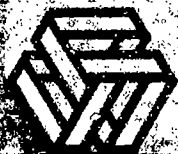
**Burlington  
County  
College**

ED 374 839

**Employee  
Development  
Series**

**Volumes I & II**

**A Quality Improvement  
Customer Service Process  
and CSS**



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Task Force on Student Issues

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION  
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS  
PREFACE

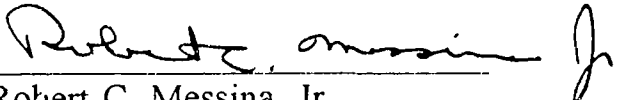
OVERVIEW _____	1
CONCEPTS _____	2
RECEIVER'S TASKS _____	3
OWNER'S TASKS _____	9
PROCESS FLOW _____	11
CUSTOMER RELATIONS SKILLS _____	13
SECURITY INTERVENTION _____	20
STUDENT CONFIDENTIALITY _____	22
RACIAL HARASSMENT AND DISCRIMINATION _____	26
SEXUAL HARASSMENT _____	31
ASSISTING DISABLED STUDENTS _____	37
CUSTOMER SERVICE SYSTEM (CSS) _____	46

# Introduction

## A Message from the President

Burlington County College is an integral part of the Burlington County community. The college provides one of the best educational values in America. Our primary and most important overall responsibility is to provide service in a pleasant, helpful, and effective manner to our students and other members of the College community. We offer the finest programs and facilities, but more importantly, our staff is made up of outstanding people who spend countless hours assisting both students and members of the community. Our employees are the heart of the institution.

I am pleased to present you with this development manual providing College-wide guidelines for improving the quality of service we at BCC provide to both our internal and external customers. The purpose of this manual is to facilitate consistent service by all employees to all students, the community, and each other. The manual has been put together by College employees, edited by College employees, and the accompanying training will be presented by College employees who deal with the public each and every day. Many of you already use the procedures described within and the training will serve as a refresher. Hopefully, everyone will learn some new bit of information that will help in our goal to continually improve customer service. One of the benefits of participating in this development session is the opportunity to share the unique situations you may have handled in your area and to learn more about the day-to-day operation of other areas. Lastly, we all learn from each other and it is important to continually solicit input on how we can create better outcomes for all of our customers.

  
Robert C. Messina, Jr.



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Without the contributions and support of the task force members listed below, this manual could not have been written. To Shirley Beller, Ann Boldt, LeRoy Joseph, Mechele Martin, and Robert Wahl -- my many thanks for attending what at times must have seemed like an endless number of meetings. As tiring as those meetings may have been, they ensured a worthwhile outcome. To Cheryl Wolozyn, my gratitude for her assistance in guaranteeing a high degree of accuracy and correctness in the manual.

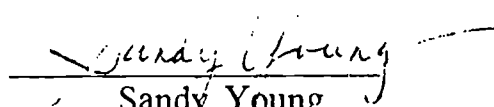
To Mary Jenkins and Belinda Long, my salute for taking a bold step where the timid dare not tread for agreeing to serve as presenters. To Rich Pokrass and his telecommunications staff, my appreciation for their support in videotaping both the case studies and the complete workshop for use by new employees.

To Joan Stoddard, whom I hooked even before she reported to BCC to take on the position of Vice President of Academic Programs, my high regard. Her support has been invaluable -- she has given me the permission to grow with this project. To Curt Cearfoss, whose thoughts and guidance are reflected on every page, my deepest appreciation for his unflinching commitment. And finally, to Bob Messina, I am grateful for the leadership he has provided to me on a one-to-one basis since the inception of this project.

### Task Force Members

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Team Leader

## PREFACE

The charge of developing a College-wide procedure to consistently handle the questions and concerns of students originated with a recommendation from the College Governance system. The following step-by-step resolution process was developed using a team approach -- members of the administration, executive staff, faculty, instructional assistants, support staff, and students worked for over a year to research how student concerns have been addressed in the past, and how we can improve the process in order to create better outcomes. An accompanying video tape will be produced to facilitate training of new employees as they come to the College. Additionally, through the evolution of this process, it was decided to address the internal as well as external customer.

Today we will cover the following: 1) a review of the manual, "A Quality Improvement Customer Service Process," and 2) "Personality Types in the Work Place." We will ask for your help in the development process of the computer data-based recording program. Suggestions for improvement to the manual will be accepted gratefully and evaluated for inclusion, and any changes decided upon will be incorporated into the manual prior to each workshop. This manual is truly a living document.

When the mainframe computer data based recording system is up and running, an additional day of training will be provided to instruct users in the mechanics of the system. At the same time, Dr. Stoddard will make a presentation dealing with understanding and handling stress.

This workshop is comprehensive, covering a variety of topics viewed as important to BCC employees. We expect that many of the topics will be the focus of additional workshops that can explore the topics more fully.



# MANAGING CUSTOMER CONCERNS

## OVERVIEW

### STATEMENT OF PURPOSE:

The process of managing customer concerns recognizes that each customer is entitled to courteous, professional service from the employees of the College. It supports the concept that we want to provide a quality environment in which the delivery of our services is accomplished in a manner that meets or exceeds the expectations of our constituencies. It acknowledges that any organization can continually improve its performance by adopting an organized, systematic process designed for that purpose and that Burlington County College embraces this goal.

It is the objective of this document and our workshop to support this goal by providing an opportunity to:

1. increase knowledge about College-wide procedures for managing customer concerns, including special cases;
2. examine and discuss a dynamic customer service process which will enhance our current strengths;
3. train employees on how to use a computer-based complaint recording system that will be used by the College to gain insights into the root causes of complaints;
4. offer helpful information dealing with the personal and interpersonal dimensions of personality, conflict and stress; and
5. build skills in the following areas of customer service.

Listening   Confrontation   Diagnosis   Problem-Solving   Feedback

# NOTES

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## QUESTIONS

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## DOODLE AREA



Since most customer inquiries are already handled effectively, the focus of our workshop will be on dealing with situations where a customer has expressed dissatisfaction with the organization in some way. We usually call expressed dissatisfaction a complaint. Effective inquiry handling and effective complaint handling are both important, but because complaints have such a negative and costly impact on the College, special emphasis will be placed on learning a process designed to dispose of complaints in a timely and effective manner.

The term "customer" will be used extensively. This is done for two reasons. First, we tend to understand the relationship that is engendered in the term. Second, it is a convenient, all-encompassing term which will allow us to include everyone with whom we conduct our business. While our primary focus is directed at dealing with our "external" customers, meaning people not employed by the College, we should take every opportunity to apply these concepts to ourselves, the "internal" customer. Since we provide information and services to each other, we are customers to each other.

If we distilled all of the literature that offers advice on building good customer relationships and providing quality service, the end product would be familiar. It looks a lot like the Golden Rule, which in one form or another asks that you treat others as you would like to be treated. All of us want and largely expect to be treated fairly and civilly. When we purchase a product or service we expect quality. When we need help or information, we resent being treated in less than an expert, professional way. That's true of all customers. The kind of treatment we expect when we are customers, our customers expect of us.

The difference between good customer service and outstanding customer service is the difference between meeting customer expectations and exceeding them.

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## QUESTIONS

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## DOODLE AREA

# MANAGING CUSTOMER CONCERNS

## CONCEPTS

There are two terms, **RECEIVER** and **OWNER**, that must be understood in order to gain a working knowledge of how our customer service process operates. The term **OWNER AREA** is also an important associated term. These terms are described below:

### 1. RECEIVER

In its simplest form, a RECEIVER is any individual in the organization who is a recipient of a customer's inquiry. We are all RECEIVERS on a regular basis. It is a function of responding to questions asked of us. The principal job of a RECEIVER is to get the inquiring party to the individual who has the information sought or the authority to grant a desired outcome, i.e., the **OWNER AREA OR OWNER**. This is especially true if a customer is expressing dissatisfaction regarding a service provided by the College.

### 2. OWNER AREA

An OWNER AREA is two things. First, it is a physical space. These spaces are typically defined as "Departments", "Divisions", "Office of the ..." and the like. An organization chart would commonly reflect these spaces and their interrelationships. Second, it is where individuals charged with providing expert information and technical assistance are located. For our purposes the people aspect is far more important than the physical space. People who work in OWNER AREAS have general and specific responsibilities assigned to them which are usually spelled out in their job descriptions. Often inquiries are handled by staff in the

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# DOODLE AREA

OWNER AREAS without referral to or interaction with the OWNER. These individuals are likely to be the first to encounter a customer with a complaint. Consequently, OWNER AREA staff are most likely to be the individuals opening files in the Customer Service System.

### 3. OWNER

An OWNER is the first-line administrator in an OWNER AREA and is the individual empowered with the authority to make judgement decisions associated with his/her office, without further approval by a superior and which may be of an exceptional nature. This empowerment can be traced to a Board Policy, Administrative Procedure or Executive-level decision which delegates and provides the parameters for this authority. OWNERS may open files in the Customer Service System and have the responsibility to respond to and close them in a timely fashion. In any instance where a complaint is unresolved by the original OWNER, the complaint is transferred to the next higher level of administration or designated executive officer. This hierarchical progression continues until a satisfactory remedy occurs.

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## QUESTIONS

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## DOODLE AREA

# MANAGING CUSTOMER CONCERNS

## RECEIVER'S TASKS

RECEIVERS are those of us who have initial contact with an inquiring party, but do not have the legitimate authority to address the inquiry or the assigned responsibility to provide the requested information or service. The principal role of a RECEIVER is to move the inquiry to the OWNER. This needs to be done with great care and courtesy, in a professional manner, with expert human relations skills and as expediently as possible. No easy task! Mishandling at this critical point of contact, independent of our best intentions or cause, can lead our customers to think that we are uncaring, insensitive, incompetent and a variety of other negative things.

Although you won't find the term "RECEIVER" in any job description, it really should be included. We are all RECEIVERS on a regular basis, and it is a job that requires skills to be done properly. Since inquiries enter the College in a variety of places and ways, we must keep our RECEIVER skills polished and ready to go at all times.

Being a RECEIVER obligates us to perform three tasks:

**LISTEN                  INFORM                  DIRECT**

These tasks will be performed whether you are dealing with a general inquiry or a complaint, but not in equal amounts. When handling a general inquiry, listening and informing tasks will predominate. When customer dissatisfaction has been expressed, listening and directing will likely prevail. As a rule of thumb, the greater the expressed dissatisfaction, the greater the need to speed the customer to the OWNER.

### 1. **LISTEN**

It is crucial that we listen carefully to what is being asked or said. Failure to listen is the mother of misunderstanding. Effective



listening is a process of gaining insight, information and an understanding of what it is that the person is seeking. We must strive to understand from the customer's point of view, not our own. This often means that we must be translators and interpreters. We have to ask leading questions and probe a bit. This clarifying process means we increase the chances of knowing what the customer means, not just what is said. Drawing a premature conclusion will likely waste time and resources and can be a great way to produce complaints.

## 2. INFORM

While it is the primary role of a RECEIVER to move the inquiry to the OWNER, that does not mean that the RECEIVER should not be as helpful as possible. Many inquiries can be handled by a RECEIVER. It is incumbent upon all employees to have some general knowledge of the College. For example, employees should know how to give directions to offices located in the building. All right, maybe not by room number, but at least by name. If WE think that finding someplace in Parker Center is difficult, imagine what it is like for the occasional or first time visitor.

Some offices or employees in the College tend to be a point of initial contact more than others. This can simply be a consequence of facilities design such as having an office near an entrance or organizational design (College Relations and Publications, Security or the Switchboard). These folks have an added responsibility to provide general, and often not so general, College information and assistance.

Be helpful, not hurtful, when providing information. Being generally correct but precisely wrong is likely to make a situation worse. When you are absolutely sure of an answer, don't hesitate to provide it. On the other hand, if you don't know the answer, admit it. None of us knows everything about the College. If you provide information, be precise and be right. Sometimes in an attempt to be helpful, or at least to avoid looking like a ninny, we are tempted to give best guesses and speak in probabilities. Might's and maybe's

creep into sentences. We suggest and imply. When we do this, we set up our colleagues and the customer to become casualties. When is the last time a customer said to you, "The person down the hall said that you might be able to take care of this"? More likely the "might" turned into a "will" by the time you met the customer. O.K., so how can you be helpful, not know the answer and still avoid ninny status? The next best thing to knowing the answer is knowing where to find the answer. So - get the inquiry to the attention of the OWNER quickly and courteously. That is the primary role of the RECEIVER anyway. If you cannot identify the OWNER, send the customer to the College Relations and Publications Office.

Customers speak and think in terms that they understand. We should not assume that the customer is familiar with our internal language. Telling the uninitiated, for instance, that there is a "flag" on his/her "record" may conjure a much different mental picture than we have. Responding that an office is the first "pod" on the left is bound to earn a quizzical look. Many of the terms that we use in the course of our work will not have meaning to someone from outside the organization. Therefore, it is important that we avoid using these terms without explanation. If we are careful to define our terms, we increase the chances of being understood.

### 3. DIRECT

It has already been mentioned several times: the primary role of the RECEIVER is to move the inquiry to the OWNER. The listening and informing tasks are simply preparatory for moving the inquiry with speed and precision to the OWNER. Once we are sure of what the customer seeks, it is time to direct the inquiry to the appropriate place. The goal here is to prevent "bouncing" the customer from place to place and to get the inquiry to the legitimate OWNER.

It is very important that the RECEIVER maintain control of the inquiry until it has been transferred to the control of the OWNER. This process is like a runner passing a baton to the next runner in a

relay race. The transfer process can be handled in a couple of ways, and the RECEIVER will need to exercise some discretion in selecting the method, based on the situation and prevailing conditions:

1. Since we are a multi-campus institution, a RECEIVER may be at one location while the OWNER is at another. In these situations, it is acceptable to conduct business by telephone and to relay information from the OWNER to the customer or to permit the customer to speak directly to the OWNER.
2. There are times when the OWNER is not available. These fall into two categories. First, an OWNER could be absent as a result of an off-campus activity, vacation, illness, etc. In this case, the customer would be put in contact with the OWNER AREA for assistance. If OWNER action is required, personnel in the OWNER AREA would record the information which would be addressed upon the OWNER'S return. If an extended absence is anticipated, the OWNER'S supervisor or other designated agent would make the needed decision. Second, OWNERS are not usually present during evening hours. In this case, a RECEIVER would enter the inquiry into the Customer Service System. If the situation warrants, the RECEIVER would immediately attempt to make contact with the OWNER by telephone.
3. If at all possible, escort the customer to the OWNER/OWNER AREA.
4. If personal escort is not possible, call the OWNER/OWNER AREA and advise that you are directing a customer to them. This accomplishes several things. First, it lets the caller know whether someone is available who can assist the customer. If not, the Customer Service System may be used. Second, it alerts the OWNER\OWNER AREA that a customer will be arriving. Third, the call will confirm that you are about to transfer control to the proper OWNER. And fourth, the caller may gain the needed information and eliminate the need to move the inquiry further.

# MANAGING CUSTOMER CONCERNS

## OWNER'S TASKS

OWNERS are employees who have the authority to make decisions which can eliminate a complaint. In this regard, an OWNER has five main tasks to perform:

**Listen      Discuss      Decide      Explain      Record**

### 1. LISTEN

The execution of this task is identical to the information provided in the section under RECEIVER'S tasks. Please refer to that section for review.

### 2. DISCUSS

Meeting customer expectations should not be confused with giving the customer whatever is requested. We all have had experiences that tell us that customers are not always able to express their needs precisely and they don't always have the "big picture." It is important that OWNERS, as experts in their respective areas, explore the available options with the customer. We come out far ahead when we offer a customer a solution better than the one he/she originally sought. This is what exceeding customer expectation is all about.

### 3. DECIDE

OWNERS control the resources of the institution and subsequently have significant influence on the level of satisfaction and dissatisfaction experienced by customers. When expressed dissatisfaction occurs, the OWNER must make a decision which addresses it. Sound managerial and human relations skills are essential, and every effort should be made

to meet or exceed the customer's expectations. The focus must be on the best way to accommodate the need rather than reasons why we can't.

#### **4. EXPLAIN**

No matter the outcome of the interaction with the customer, it is essential that the customer understands the rationale behind it. It is not helpful if the customer views the outcome as arbitrary. Going over the facts which led to your decision serves to reinforce the decision making process and makes it clear that certain specific facts or circumstances and only those caused the outcome in this case. If a decision is unacceptable to the customer, an explanation is commonly expected if not demanded. In this case, be clear, precise and thorough in your explanation. Any errors at this point will tend to come back to haunt you.

As an outcome of the decision making process, you or the customer may have some follow-up activity that must be performed. Carefully explain, and better yet, put in writing any action that you will be taking. This would hold true for any subsequent activity that is expected or required of the customer as well.

#### **5. RECORD**

OWNERS have a responsibility to manage the Customer Service System although OWNER AREA personnel may actually make entries. When an acceptable outcome to a complaint occurs, the OWNER must insure the outcome is recorded and close the file. If the decision is unacceptable to the customer, the OWNER must insure that ownership is transferred successfully to the next level of supervision.

# MANAGING CUSTOMER CONCERNS

## PROCESS FLOW

The process flow is that part of the customer service system that describes how an inquiry or complaint moves through the organization. Our process utilizes the chain-of-command concept which reflects supervisor/subordinate relationships. This means that a complaint would move through our organization in concert with the prescribed supervisory relationship of one staff member to another and one office to another. At first glance, it may appear that we do precisely that at present. The process defined here does build upon and reinforce the strengths of current organizational structure and relationships but includes some modifications which will make complaint resolution more effective. Please remember that this process does not apply to the "Special Cases" which are described in a later section of the manual.

The process flow occurs in two stages:

1. The first stage acknowledges the arrival of an inquiry and assumes appropriate action by RECEIVERS, staff in OWNER AREAS and OWNERS. If the customer finds the outcome acceptable, the first stage is completed and the process ceases.

2. The second stage begins if, for any reason, the customer expresses dissatisfaction with us. If the complaint is presented to a RECEIVER, it is the responsibility of the RECEIVER to expedite the movement of the complaint to the appropriate OWNER or OWNER AREA. If the complaint is made in person or by telephone, it may be very appropriate for one or more staff in the OWNER AREA to speak to the customer. Even if the staff member does not have the authority to remedy the situation, the dialogue provides an opportunity to do some fact-finding and correct any miscommunication or misunderstanding. When expressed dissatisfaction occurs, it is **absolutely** necessary to record the complaint in the Customer Service System. This may be accomplished either by a staff member in the OWNER AREA or the OWNER, but it is the responsibility of the OWNER to insure that it is done. Failing to enter the information defeats the purpose of the process.

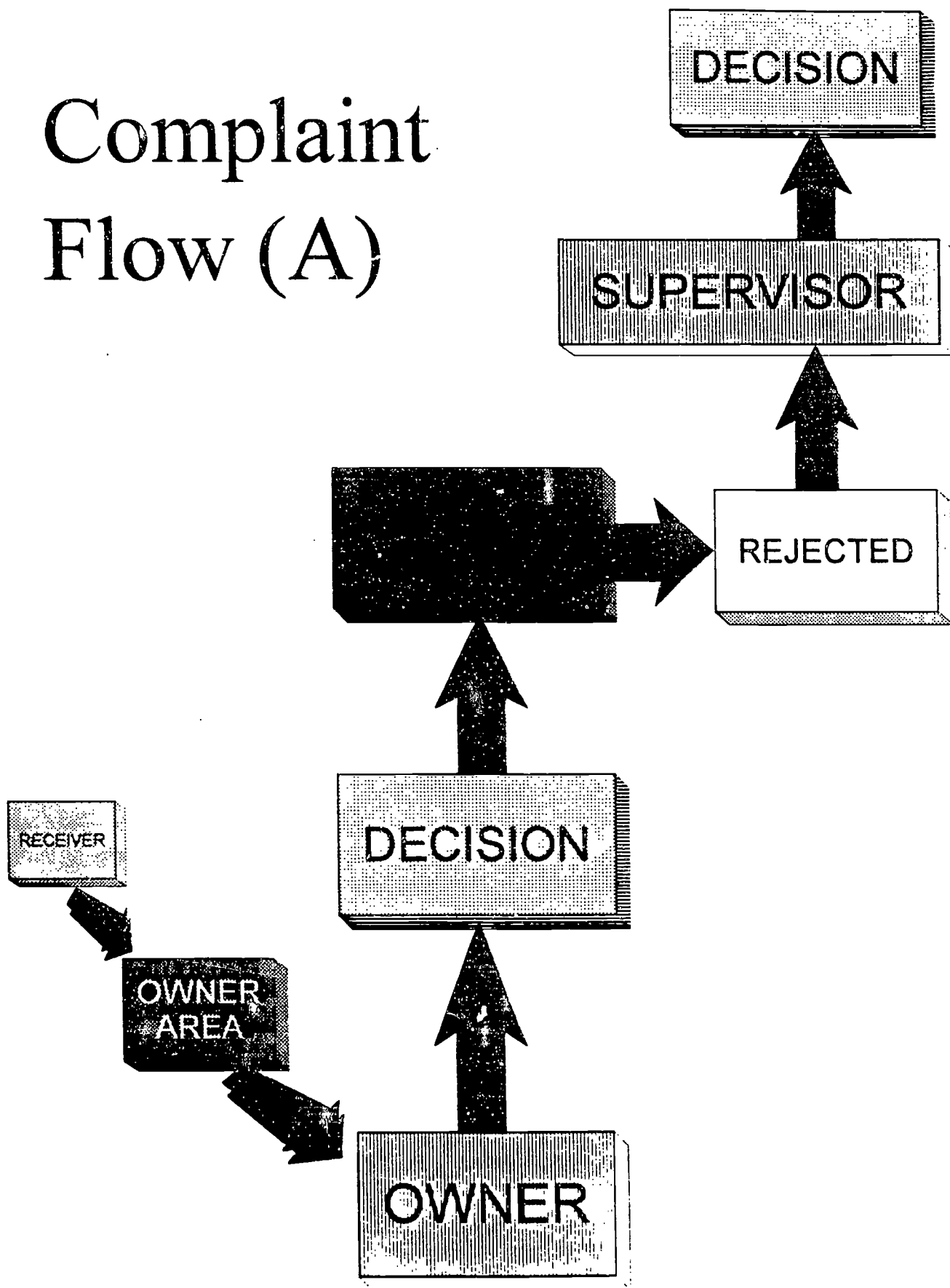


OWNERS are charged with the responsibility and provided with the "legitimate" authority to make decisions. That charge is the essence of the second stage of the process. OWNERS can be the recipient of the dissatisfaction or the cause. In the first instance, a complaint may be associated with a Board Policy, Administrative Procedure or office practice. A customer may believe that he or she has been adversely affected by one or more of these things and seek administrative relief from an OWNER perceived to have the authority to do so. In the second instance, an OWNER may make a decision that is unacceptable to the customer.

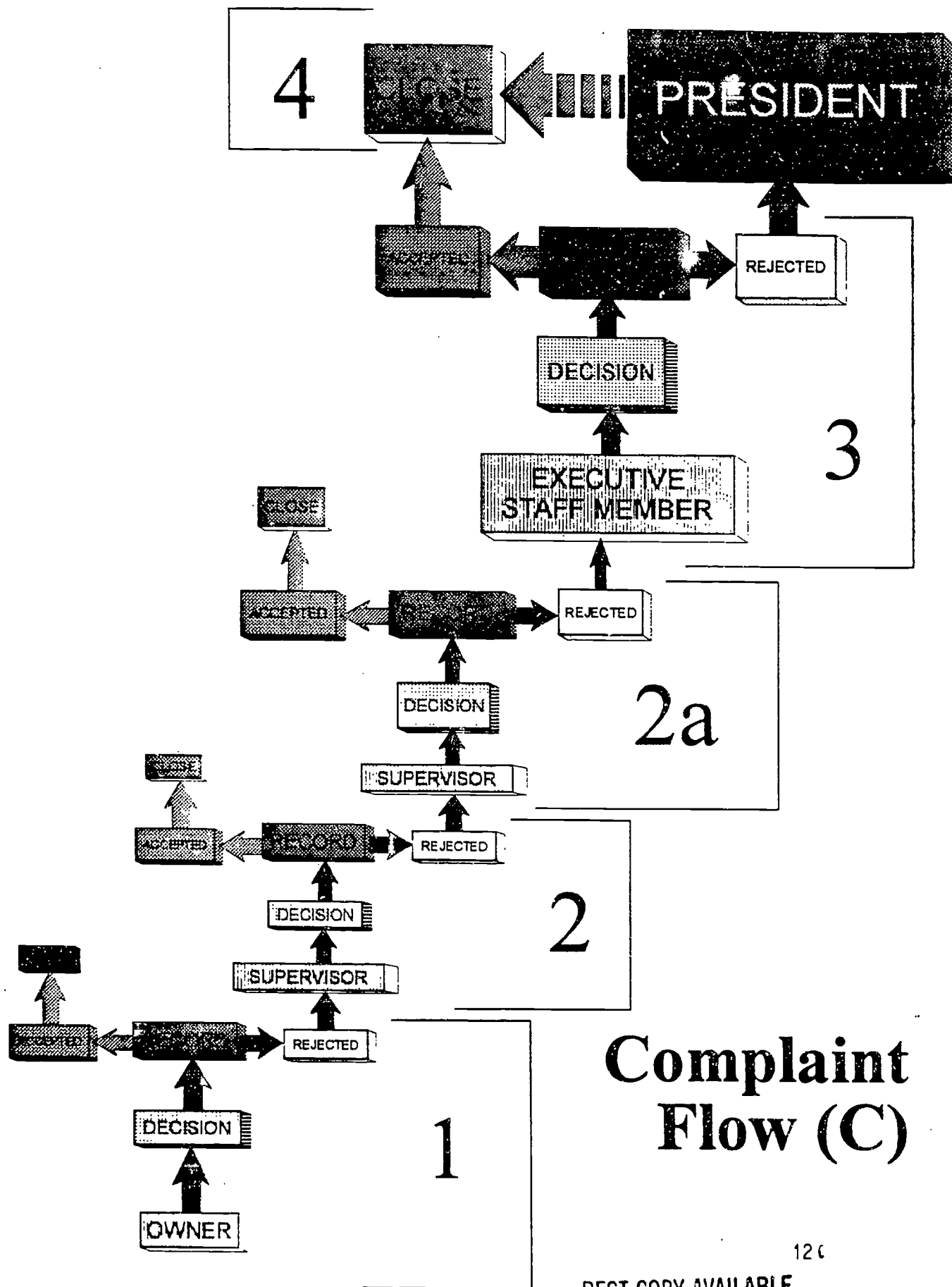
In either case, or any case, the OWNER must insure that expressed dissatisfaction is recorded in the Customer Service System. All pertinent facts should be included as well as the decision of the OWNER. If the customer accepts the outcome, the file is closed. If the customer rejects the outcome, the file remains open and the OWNER transfers ownership to his/her supervisor. The transfer is accomplished through the Customer Service System which may be supplemented by an in-person notification. Complaints which are unresolved at one level will continue to move through successive subordinate to supervisor transfers ending with the Office of the President. The President's decision will be final. No other internal process is available for appeal. The outcome will be recorded in the Customer Service System and the file closed.



# Complaint Flow (A)







# Complaint Flow (C)

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# MANAGING CUSTOMER CONCERNS

## CUSTOMER RELATIONS SKILLS

An inquiry is a request for information or service. Inquiries occur in the College hundreds of times each day and arrive in several ways. They are made in person, by telephone, by letter and by other telecommunication devices such as FAX and computer-to-computer transmission. None is more important than another, but each type has its own characteristics and requires different customer relations skills and strategies.

### In Person Skills

#### 1. LISTENING/INQUIRING SKILLS

It is important that you listen closely to what the person in front of you is saying. Maintain good eye contact with the customer to show you are listening. Use each person's name whenever possible, so that he/she feels you recognize him/her as a person. Focus on what you can do to help. Avoid using the words "no" or "I don't know." Display empathy and understanding for the customer. This will help to ease any unpleasant situation and shows your willingness to help. Make sure the person understands what you have said. Repeat if necessary. Be sure to apologize if an error has been made, remembering not to blame the parties that have been mentioned. Lastly, if you find you cannot help this customer, refer him or her to your supervisor or to someone of authority who may be able to offer assistance.

#### 2. CONFRONTATION

Learning how to handle dissatisfaction is important in order to produce desirable outcomes. This is especially true when dealing with customers who act in an aggressive, angry or hostile manner. Confrontational situations are not easy to deal with. It is a challenge not to get caught up in the emotions that sometimes surround a complaint and reflect the same behavior that is being directed at you, but to do so is absolutely unacceptable. A confrontation is an opportunity to demonstrate how well you can perform

under adverse conditions. It is a chance to show off your skills and talents in handling people. The following are a few useful tools to use when you are confronted with a difficult situation.

- ✓ Recognize a disagreement before it turns into a heated conflict;
- ✓ Always maintain your composure;
- ✓ Have a positive attitude and professional manner;
- ✓ Focus on the solution, not the problem;
- ✓ Don't take the event personally;
- ✓ Don't wrestle over who is to blame or right and wrong;
- ✓ If possible, move the confrontation out of public view;
- ✓ Behave in a confident manner;
- ✓ Openly express your interest and willingness to be of assistance;
- ✓ Know your limitations;
- ✓ Allow some time for the customer to blow off steam;
- ✓ Be sympathetic, but dwell on facts not feelings;
- ✓ If the customer talks in loud tones, talk in soft tones;
- ✓ Avoid exposing the customer's "laundry" to the rest of the world.

You may be tempted to give up on these difficult situations quickly, but remember to always maintain your composure. You are setting an example for others by showing them that you're a real pro, that you'll "go the distance" even with what seems to be unreasonable to you. A positive and professional manner will pay off with most customers.

If you suspect that someone may become orally or physically abusive, and a supervisor is not available to intercede, notify security. Their presence in the area may defuse the inappropriate behavior. You are not responsible for another person's angry behavior. If you have done everything possible to help this person, **DO NOT BLAME YOURSELF** for this confrontation.

### **3. TACTICS**

An important part of the College's mission is to provide customers with our services. Sometimes that may mean having to say "no." However, "no" can be conveyed without being insulting or displaying anger. It may take all of your experience and skill to refuse a customer's request and make the customer feel happy about it. But you must always try to achieve this goal because, as a representative of the College, your job is to provide service, satisfy the customer's needs, help retain current customers and recruit new ones. Do not let the parameters of policy and/or procedures stand in the way of your offering positive assistance. If you are not sure of the best approach, you should not hesitate to ask your supervisor for assistance. However, there are general guidelines which can be used to help you in a situation where you have to say "no."

#### **A. Explain the Reasons for Refusing the Request**

This takes the pressure off of you as an individual. In telling the customer why you cannot say "yes" to his/her specific request, you are letting the customer know you are not acting on your own, but instead you are following policies that have been created for everyone's benefit.

#### **B. Suggest Alternatives**

This keeps a positive tone in the encounter with the customer. Never turn down a customer request with a flat "no." If at all possible, don't use the word "no" in your conversation with the customer. Try to offer any assistance or alternatives you can within the policy guidelines. Try to begin your conversation with what you can do for the customer in this particular situation. Let the customer know that you will try to help resolve the problem.

### **C. Take Immediate Action.**

This resolves the situation and keeps the customer from dwelling on the initial negative response you may have had to give her or him. Try to take some action or suggest an alternative while the customer is standing there. You may also want to ask your supervisor for help.

## **Telephone Skills**

### **1. LISTENING/INQUIRING SKILLS**

#### **A. LISTEN**

Make sure you not only hear what the person on the other line is saying, but listen as well. Listen to the tone of the person's voice. Separate the facts from feelings. Find out what has or has not already been done in terms of addressing the customer's concern prior to your receipt of the call. Determine the person's actual need or problem.

#### **B. EMPATHIZE**

When you display empathy and understanding for the caller, it helps to put him/her at ease. This communicates your recognition of the problem and indicates your willingness to help. Address the caller by name whenever possible so that he/she will feel you recognize the person as more than just a problem.

C. Let the customer know what you can do for him/her at this point to help. The caller's idea of a solution might not come close to resolving the problem, and chances are he or she does not have your knowledge of how our system functions.

D Make sure the person understands what you have said. Ask for agreement.

E. **EXPLAIN** the reasons for refusing the request.

Explaining the reasons for saying "no" takes the pressure off of you as an individual. In telling the person why you cannot say "yes" to his or her



specific request, you are letting the customer know you are not acting on your own, but instead you are following policies that have been created for everyone's benefit.

- F. If the customer seems unreceptive, start the conversation over if necessary.
- G. When you find yourself confronted with a difficult situation you cannot handle, involve either your supervisor or some other person of authority. Certain problems may require the direct involvement of your supervisor. Learn what these problem areas are, so that you can determine early in the conversation what should or should not be done.

## 2. Understanding AUDIX

In some cases the *AUDIX* System installation was the best thing that could have happened. In other cases it can be a nightmare and a source of constant complaints from both the staff and customers. The system was installed so that offices or individuals could be directly contacted without overloading the system due to the constant influx of calls directly to the operator. It allows you the freedom of receiving messages and information when you are not personally at your desk or even on campus. The system also allows you to receive information or messages when you are on the line with another party and to record or send messages to other *AUDIX* users.

It was not installed to act as a screening device, or to take incoming calls when you are holding a personal conversation at your desk with another co-worker. An *AUDIX* information booklet is available from the telephone room. This booklet provides instructions on the proper uses and features of the *AUDIX* System.

Transferring a telephone call is a common but very important customer service function. When transferring a call to another telephone use the following procedure.

1. Inform the caller that you are transferring his/her call.

2. Let the caller know the extension number and name of the person to whom his/her call is being transferred.
3. Dial the transfer extension and attempt to make contact with the individual the caller is seeking.
  - a. If contact is made, identify yourself and inform the person that you are making a transfer call. Complete the transfer by executing the appropriate **AUDIX** feature for your telephone.
  - b. If contact is not made, reestablish your voice communication with the caller and offer him/her a choice of the following options:
    1. You will transfer the call to the party you did reach or to the AUDIX recording device of the transfer extension.
    2. He/she may call the extension directly at a later time. (Double check to make sure the caller has the name and extension number.)
    3. You will take a message and deliver it to the requested party.

**When transferring a call, DO NOT SIMPLY DIAL THE TRANSFER EXTENSION AND EXECUTE THE AUDIX TRANSFER FEATURE.**

### **3. Proper Identification Protocol**

When answering the phone, it is proper as well as polite to state your department and your name. It is expected that all employees will answer phone calls with this information as a minimum. The greeting could be extended to include an offer to assist or help, e.g.,

"Computer Center. This is Mrs. Adams. May I help you?"

Occasionally, the caller may not recall your name. Offer or repeat your name upon request.

#### 4. Handling Abusive People

Follow the procedures outlined in the Listening Section first. If the caller continues to be difficult and starts using abusive language, it is appropriate to tell him/her you are trying to help, but cannot continue the conversation if the caller continues to speak to you in this manner. If he/she refuses to stop, suggest speaking with your supervisor or calling back when the caller has regained control and can help in addressing his/her problem. DO NOT "HANG UP" ON A CUSTOMER. Instead, conclude the conversation and gently place the receiver down.

Remember - Do not take these situations personally. Blaming yourself is counterproductive in situations beyond your control. You are not responsible for someone else's inappropriate behavior, but you should still try to correct the problem. If you have done everything possible to solve the problem, DO NOT FEEL GUILTY.

***GOOD HUMAN RELATIONS  
PROMOTES GOOD PUBLIC RELATIONS***

# MANAGING CUSTOMER CONCERNS

## SECURITY INTERVENTION

The Security Department and the Office of The Dean of Student Services (Counseling, Financial Aid, Admissions, Athletics, EOF & Co-op) of Burlington County College work together to insure that all students and staff reap the benefits of a secure, well functioning educational and work environment. To that end, knowing when to call Security and when to call one of the Student Services offices might not always be clear-cut. The following might help to make these choices easier and therefore more effective.

### WHEN DO I CALL SECURITY?

- \* If anyone is in the act of committing a crime, or is a danger to himself/herself or others
- \* If someone is or appears to have been injured
- \* When a group or crowd of people appears to be getting out of control
- \* When any of the above is a remote or not-so-remote possibility, remember it is better to play it safe

Keep in mind that our security staff are trained professionals. Do not at any time interfere with a security person while he/she is carrying out his/her duties. When placing a call to security, be as specific as possible with your request for assistance. Often their mere presence will subdue an explosive situation. On the other hand, some situations are more subtle, and hasty intervention could make a bad situation worse. While we expect security to exercise a level of sensitivity and avoid "bulldozing" into a situation without carefully assessing the need for the intervention, your help is needed. When you ask that a security officer be dispatched to your area, alert him/her to what is happening in as much detail as possible so that the least disruptive course of action can be taken.

### WHEN DO I CALL THE STUDENT SERVICES AREA?

- \* If someone appears to be emotionally distressed
- \* If the individual specifically requests help from a student services area

- \* When you notice someone participating in inappropriate or strange behavior which you feel might warrant some support from a counselor or the Dean of Student Services

The Office of Student Services is also staffed with trained professionals skilled in various areas. Feel free to contact any of the offices with your questions and concerns. On occasion the Offices of Student Services and Security may work collaboratively on a problem if they determine that such action is warranted.

# MANAGING CUSTOMER CONCERNS

## STUDENT CONFIDENTIALITY

Many offices in the College provide information to our student customers. Occasionally someone other than the student may seek student-related information. It is essential that those offices which have responsibility for student records and personnel who have access to this information know what may and may not be disclosed to people other than the student. Disclosure is not a matter of prerogative; it is a matter of law. We are obligated to protect personally identifiable information, not casually provide it.

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) , as amended, was designed to:

1. protect the privacy of student educational records;
2. establish the rights of students to inspect and review their educational records;
3. provide guidelines for the correction of inaccurate or misleading data, except grades; and to
4. permit students to control disclosure of their educational records with certain exceptions. Exceptions would include educational authorities or agents of the Federal or State Government who may obtain specific information pertinent to the receipt of Financial Aid or Veterans' Benefits.

In general, student information cannot be revealed to individuals other than the student unless you have written permission or have absolute knowledge that written permission exists.

## PUBLIC OR DIRECTORY INFORMATION

The categories of information listed below provide some guidance regarding the kinds of information that are usually safe to provide in response to in-person, telephone or written inquiries.

- ✓ Student's name
- ✓ Dates of attendance
- ✓ Student status (Full or Part-time)
- ✓ Most recent educational institution attended
- ✓ Major field of study
- ✓ Awards
- ✓ Honors and degrees received
- ✓ Height and weight of athletic team members
- ✓ Participation in officially recognized activities and sports

Although the Privacy Act does not restrict disclosure of Directory Information, there is one cautionary note. The student may do so. A student can notify the Registrar's Office in writing of his/her intention, and the restriction will remain in effect from the date of receipt of the student's letter until the end of the current academic year.

Many of us have access to student information via our computer terminals. Often this information "belongs" to another OWNER AREA and OWNER. We have been granted this access to permit us to perform tasks or make decisions with this information. This does not mean that we are at liberty to share this information with others, including other employees, who do not need this information to do their jobs. Therefore, if you are the RECEIVER of an inquiry about a student, get the inquiry to the OWNER as expediently as possible.



It is very important that our students understand the protections and the restrictions provided by the Privacy Act. It is equally important that students inform significant others in their lives who may seek such information. When uninformed parents or spouses call for information, they are often angered that we cannot simply tell them what they want to know. Parents can get pretty testy when we cannot give them their child's grades. A friend is usually perplexed when we cannot simply direct him/her to the classroom where the person he/she seeks is located. A husband can get annoyed when he cannot obtain his wife's class schedule from us. A student can be frustrated when we refuse to supply an address or phone number of a classmate. To avoid the emotions, dissatisfaction and unpleasant confrontations that can surround these encounters, we must take every occasion to encourage our student customers to be informed and to inform their parents, spouses and friends.

## CONFIDENTIALITY AND COMPLAINTS

On occasion, a customer may express dissatisfaction and not reveal his/her identity or request that his/her identity remain confidential. If a customer expresses dissatisfaction about a physical object or institutional process, confidentiality is hardly an issue. Sometimes the customer simply wants an employee in the institution to be aware of something that has disturbed him/her but is not seeking any personal remedy. On the other hand, if a complaint is directed at a staff member, the customer's perceived need for confidentiality will be greater. A request for anonymity is often predicated upon some fear or perception of reprisal. We may not agree with the perception, but we have an obligation to respect the feelings and perceptions of others. Even if we cannot obtain the identity of the person, we should view the occasion as an opportunity to become aware of and act upon expressed dissatisfaction.

If a customer provides his/her name and requests confidentiality, we must grant it to the extent that it is possible. If we refuse, we will discourage some customers from reporting their dissatisfaction. Without knowledge of the dissatisfaction, we will be unable to address the concerns and helpless to develop and implement strategies that could eliminate their recurrence.

While we will do everything possible to safeguard identity, the customer must understand that the assurance severely limits our ability to act upon the information that is provided. If a customer alleges poor performance or conduct

on the part of a staff member and concurrently requests anonymity, we would be unable to investigate the matter. To do so would necessitate discussing the circumstances with the staff member or others in the work area, and in doing so, the identity of the customer could likely be determined. We can assure the customer that the information that is furnished and the customer's identity will remain confidential only so long as no action will be taken as a result of that information.

# MANAGING CUSTOMER CONCERNS

## RACIAL HARASSMENT AND DISCRIMINATION

Racial harassment on college campuses has increased over the last five years, according to a study by D. K. Magner (1989)<sup>1</sup>. This re-emergence of college racism, as well as increased racial tension within the general population, has renewed interest in the problem of racism on college campuses. Almost daily there have been news accounts of alleged racism at some of our most prestigious colleges and universities. The following provides general information on racial harassment:

1. A definition
2. Types of racial harassment
  - a. Oral hate speech
  - b. Written hate speech
  - c. Symbolic acts
3. What can be done to improve race relations
4. Where to go for help
5. Board Policy #914

<sup>1</sup> D. K. Magner (1989) "Black and Whites on the Campuses," The Chronicle of Higher Education 35, 28-33.

## WHAT IS RACIAL HARASSMENT?

Racial harassment refers to any behavior, verbal or physical, that attacks, demeans or offends individuals on the basis of race, ethnicity or national origin, and that

1. involves a stated or implicit threat to the victim's academic or employment status;
2. has the purpose or effect of interfering with an individual's academic or work performance; and/or
3. creates an intimidating or offensive academic or work environment.

## VERBAL HARASSMENT

Hate speech refers to oral and written words and to symbolic acts that convey a grossly negative assessment of particular persons or groups based on their race, gender, ethnicity, etc. It may be in the form of epithets, slurs, insults, taunts, t-shirt messages, posters, student bulletin boards, cartoons, college newspaper articles, etc. For example, at the University of Pennsylvania The Daily Pennsylvanian ran a photo of a black man drinking cheap wine under the caption, "West Philadelphian."<sup>2</sup> This angered many black students who saw it as a racist insult.

Hate speech may be conveyed through destruction or defacement of posters, newspapers, bulletin boards, through burning crosses, painting swastikas on buildings, and even through themes of fraternity social functions such as black-face parties, jungle parties, etc.

## RESEARCH ON CAMPUS RACISM

- Recent studies found that women are less prejudiced than men on college campuses .

<sup>2</sup> M.M. Bierly (1985), "Prejudice Toward Contemporary Outgroups.", Journal of Applied Psychology 15. R.T. Carter (1990), Journal of Counseling Development 69.

- Campus harassment can make the educational environment hostile.
- Colleges and universities are having a difficult time dealing with alleged instances of racial harassment.
- One reaction on some campuses to the modest increase of minority undergraduates has been an increase in racial harassment and violence against minority students.
- There were more than 200 incidents of racial harassment reported on U.S. campuses within the last two years, and the number is increasing.
- Many colleges do not have policies regarding racial harassment due to the legal questions regarding the first amendment.
- Racial conflict on college campuses is a reflection of the larger society.
- Research data support the notion that an institutional commitment to diversity can substantially improve race relations on campus.

#### **SOME THINGS THE COLLEGE CAN DO**

- Create a diverse multicultural environment on campus.
- Increase the representation of minorities in the faculty and administration.
- Recruit more minority students.
- Clear policies should be developed that take strong stances against all types of discriminatory behavior. These policies should be well publicized and should meet requirements of the U.S. Constitution regarding freedom of speech.
- Guide students and staff in an exploration of the meaning of racial identity and racial pride.

## WHERE TO GO FOR ASSISTANCE

Students with a complaint about racial harassment should be directed to Dean Clarence Whittaker in Room 125 E or at extension 470.

If a student calls to complain about any issue, academic or other, and that student mentions the belief that he/she feels racially discriminated against, the student should be **immediately** referred to Dean Whittaker.

Staff with concerns about racial harassment should contact Dean Eugene Jones in Room 126 A or at extension 456.

## BURLINGTON COUNTY COLLEGE

### BOARD POLICY No. 914

TITLE: RACIAL/ETHNIC HARASSMENT

Date: September 18, 1990  
Supersedes:

Our community depends on trust and civility. A willingness to recognize the dignity and worth of each person at Burlington County College is essential to our mission.

The College celebrates the diversity of its community. We come from many different backgrounds and include different races, religions, and ethnic ancestry. Learning to understand the differences among us, as well as the similarities, is an important dimension of education, one that continues for a lifetime. Tolerance alone, however, is not enough. Respect and understanding are also needed. We should delight in our differences, and should seek to appreciate the richness and personal growth which our diversity provides us as members of this community.

It is, therefore, the intention of Burlington County College to provide equal opportunity to qualified individuals in the operation of its programs, in work and academic environments that are conducive to the achievement of work and academic goals, and free from any implicit or explicit forms of racial or ethnic harassment. For the purposes of this policy, the term racial/ethnic harassment refers to any behavior, verbal or physical, that attacks, demeans or offends

individuals on the basis of race, ethnic or national origin, and that:

1. Involves a stated or implicit threat to the victim's academic or employment status;
2. Has the purpose or effect of interfering with an individual's academic work performance; and/or
3. Creates an intimidating or offensive academic or work environment.

The College regards such behavior, whether verbal or physical, as a violation of the standards of conduct required of all persons associated with the institution. The prohibition against racial/ethnic harassment applies to all interaction on the College campus, in College facilities or within the context of College related activities. We expect members of our college community to demonstrate a basic generosity of spirit that precludes expressions of bigotry. Accordingly, those inflicting such behavior on others are subject to the full range of the College's disciplinary actions, including separation from the institution.

Not every act that might be offensive to an individual or a group necessarily will be considered as harassment and/or a violation of the College's standards of conduct. In determining whether an act constitutes racial or ethnic harassment, the totality of the circumstances that pertain to any incident in its context must be carefully reviewed and due consideration must be given to the protection of individual rights, freedom of speech, academic freedom, and advocacy.

To expedite the investigation and resolution of complaints, should they arise, the College has developed both informal and formal mechanisms for mediation, resolution, and adjudication. Those individuals who honestly believe they have been a victim of racial or ethnic harassment should contact the College Affirmative Action Officer to obtain a copy of the Burlington County College Harassment Complaint Procedures.



# MANAGING CUSTOMER CONCERNS

## SPECIAL CASES

### SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Sexual Harassment, while not a new concept in either the work or educational venues, has become an important area of concern in the 1990's. For the purpose of this manual, we will attempt to provide general information related to Sexual Harassment. This information will include:

1. definitions
2. descriptions of specific behaviors
3. statistics
4. where to go for help
5. a copy of Board Policy 916

With entire books being written on this topic, it is not feasible to include all of the legal and ethical implications which come into play under the heading of Sexual Harassment. Therefore, if after reading this chapter you find your questions and/or concerns are not addressed, contact the Director of Counseling and Student Services for additional information.

#### WHAT IS SEXUAL HARASSMENT?

Sexual Harassment is defined by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) as "unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature." This harassment comes in two forms, "quid pro quo" (something for something), and "hostile environment." Quid pro quo harassment makes sex a requirement for obtaining or keeping something, i.e. a job, grade, apartment, etc. Hostile environment harassment does not have the same tangible effect on work, school or housing as does quid pro quo harassment. Rather, it places the complainant in such an uncomfortable position that an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment is created.



It is important to remember that a major theme of Sexual Harassment is POWER, with sex being used as the vehicle.

## **WHAT SPECIFIC BEHAVIORS DO AND DO NOT DEFINE SEXUAL HARASSMENT?**

Sexual Harassment can be verbal, non-verbal and physical.

### Verbal Harassment

Propositions - "If you spend some private time with me, I can practically guarantee that you'll do better on the next exam."

Messages with sexual content - "Let me tell you about this XXX rated movie I saw last night."

Whistles or catcalls.

Sexual Harassment was not found in cases where women were asked for a couple of dates by co-workers, subjected to only three offensive incidents over 18 months, or subjected to only occasional teasing or isolated crude jokes and sexually explicit remarks.

### Nonverbal Harassment

Suggestive looks or gestures

Staring or leering

Displaying posters or pictures of sexual nature

### Physical Harassment

Rape or attempted rape

Cornering or tapping

Pinching, grabbing or patting

Touching, hugging or kissing

## STATISTICS

- \* It is estimated that one out of every two women will be harassed at some point during her academic or working life.
- \* Sexual harassment cost the federal government an estimated \$189 million during a two-year period examined.
- \* 35% of female students say they experienced some form of gender harassment from their instructors or professors.
- \* 14% of men feel they have experienced sexual harassment in the workplace.
- \* 67% of men say they would feel flattered by a sexual proposition from a woman, while only 17% of women say they would feel flattered by a sexual proposition from a man.
- \*\* It is important to note that Sexual Harassment is directly attributed to the person being affected by the abuse, not on the intent of the harasser.

## WHAT CAN BE DONE TO HELP PREVENT SEXUAL HARASSMENT?

1. Don't assume - Your personal idea of what is and is not offensive may not be shared by your peers and co-workers.
2. Think before you speak - How would you feel if some off-color remark were made to your mother, sister, daughter or wife?
3. Do not send mixed messages - If you have no intention of going out with your boss, make your refusal clear. If offended, tell the offender specifically what offends you.
4. Know your employer's policy regarding Sexual Harassment.
5. Admit when a problem exists and report it to the proper department.

Chances are you are not alone in being the victim of harassment, and even if you are, rarely will the problem simply disappear. On the other hand, by reporting the incident you can get the support you need, and the perpetrator of the abuse will see that you mean business.

**REMEMBER, SEXUAL HARASSMENT IS AN ABUSE OF POWER AND IS A FORM OF ILLEGAL SEXUAL DISCRIMINATION.**

If an allegation of sexual harassment is made to you:

1. inform the claimant that we have an employee in the College who has been designated to handle allegations of sexual harassment
2. call Alice Fagans regarding the situation and if possible escort the individual to her office

**BURLINGTON COUNTY COLLEGE**

**BOARD POLICY No. 916**

**TITLE: SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

**Date: November 17, 1992**

**Supersedes: September 18, 1990**

As an employer and an educational institution, Burlington County College is committed to eradicating sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is prohibited because it is intimidating and an abuse of power and inconsistent with the College's policies, practices, and philosophy. Sexual harassment in any form will not be tolerated.

Sexual harassment is a matter of particular concern to an academic community in which students, faculty, administrators, and staff must rely on strong bonds of intellectual trust and dependence. It is therefore the intention of the College to provide work and academic environments that are conducive to the achievement of work and academic goals, and free of any implicit or explicit forms of sexual harassment.

Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when:

1. Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's academic or work performance;
2. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for academic or work performance decisions affecting such individual;
3. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's academic or work performance, or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive academic or work environment.

The College regards such behavior, whether verbal or physical, as a violation of the standards of conduct required of all persons associated with the Institution. We expect all members of our college community to demonstrate a basic generosity of spirit that precludes expressions of sexual oppressiveness. Accordingly, anyone engaging in such behavior is subject to the full range of the College's disciplinary actions, including termination of employment and dismissal from the institution.

Employees, students, and other persons sexually harassed or having personal knowledge of sexual harassment are responsible for timely reporting such harassment in accordance with procedures. Each person has an affirmative duty to maintain the College free of sexual harassment and sexual intimidation. Any form of retaliation against an individual for reporting sexual harassment is prohibited and shall result in disciplinary action.

The College will investigate all reports of sexual harassment and take appropriate corrective action. To expedite the investigation and resolution of complaints, the College has developed both informal and formal procedures for mediation, resolution, and adjudication. To obtain further information, contact the College's Director of Counseling and Student Activities to obtain a copy of the Burlington County College Complaint and Investigation Procedures for Charges of Sexual Harassment.

## EXCEPTION AND APPEALS COMMITTEE

This committee is for those students who wish to petition for an exemption from financial policies. This petition must be in writing. Forms are available at the Registration Office at both the Pemberton Campus and Cinnaminson Center. The Committee is comprised of various college staff and students.

## ACADEMIC STANDARDS COMMITTEE

This Committee functions to allow students to appeal academic dismissal. Each student is required to document the circumstances which led to dismissal and any corrective action which would justify reinstatement. When the documentation is completed and signed by a college counselor, the student will be notified of when he/she must appear before the Committee. The necessary forms are available in the Counseling Office in Pemberton and in the Business Office at the Cinnaminson Center.

## MOTOR VEHICLES COMMITTEE

This Committee has been established to review appeals by individuals ticketed by the Security Department for violations of parking regulations. Appeal forms are located at the Security Offices at the Pemberton and Cinnaminson campuses.

# MANAGING CUSTOMER CONCERNS

## Assisting Disabled Students

### INTRODUCTION

While the passage of the Federal Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) has brought nationwide focus to the priority of society (including institutions of higher education) to address the needs of disabled individuals, legislation in this area is not a recent development. Indeed, the ADA in a sense merely amplifies the provisions of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

This section will indicate how the Federal government defines a disabled individual, the obligations of the college under the ADA, the types of services which the college provides to disabled students, the role of faculty members in addressing the needs of disabled students, the process which faculty members should follow to have any questions or concerns answered, and the process which students should follow for resolving any problems which they may have related to their disabilities.

### WHAT TYPES OF INDIVIDUALS ARE COVERED BY THE ADA?

The ADA protects two classes of people as follows:

- . Qualified individuals with disabilities;
- . Individuals with a known relationship or association with a disabled individual.

While individuals in the latter group are protected by the ADA, the college need not make reasonable accommodations for such individuals on campus.

## WHAT IS THE DEFINITION OF A DISABLED INDIVIDUAL UNDER THE ADA?

The ADA provides a broad definition for the term "disability" to include any physical or mental disorder or impairment that prevents an individual from leading a normal life.

To expand upon this somewhat, a disabled individual is one who:

- . Has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities of the individual;
- . Has a record of such an impairment; or
- . Is regarded as having such an impairment.

Major life activities are functions such as caring for oneself, executing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, and working.

Physical disorders include cosmetic disfigurement, anatomical loss, cardiovascular, reproductive, digestive, genital, urinary, blood, and skin problems.

Infectious diseases which limit one or more major life activities, including HIV, are considered the same as any other disability.

Mental disorders which qualify an individual to be considered disabled include retardation, emotional and mental illness, and certain specific learning disabilities.

It is important to note that the ADA specifically states that the Act does not pertain to the following conditions: current use of an illegal drug; homosexuality and bisexuality; social behavior and identity disorders; compulsive gambling; kleptomania and pyromania; predisposition to illness; temporary, non-chronic impairment; personality traits; environmental, cultural or economic disadvantages; advanced age; and pregnancy.

## **WHAT TYPES OF INDIVIDUALS MUST BE ACCOMMODATED UNDER THE ADA?**

In order to be protected under the ADA, a disabled person must be "qualified," which means that the individual, with or without reasonable accommodation, auxiliary aids or removal of barriers, can meet the essential eligibility requirements to participate in a program.



## WHAT SERVICES DOES THE COLLEGE OFFER TO DISABLED STUDENTS?

The college offers several services to disabled students. A chart of key information follows.

<u>Type of Service</u>	<u>Contact Person</u>
General Inquiries/Information	Clarence Whittaker, Dean of Student Services Extension 470, Room 125E
Academic Concerns	Mr. Curtis Cearfoss, Acting Assistant Dean of Business Studies Division and Associate Dean of College Extension and Evening Services Extension 321, Room 321  Dr. Shirley Hughes, Acting Assistant Dean of Humanities and Social Sciences Division Extension 616, Room AC-301  Mr. Charles Swannell, Acting Assistant Dean of Language and Literature Division Extension 625, Room 331J  Dr. Marion Mulholland, Director of Nursing and Allied Health Extension 407, Room 147X  Dr. Frank Nappo, Acting Assistant Dean of Science/Mathematics/Technology Division and Associate Dean of Academic Affairs Extension 401, Room 147U  Dr. Joan G. Stoddard, Vice President of Academic Programs Extension 326, Room AC-334
Career Adaptive Learning Literacy Laboratory (CALL Laboratory)	Edith Serio, Library Technician Assistant Extension 202, Room 311A
Counseling Services	Mechele Martin, Director of Counseling Extension 461, Room 135M
Measurement and Testing Services	Alice Fagans, Director of Testing and Assessment Services Extension 426, Room 420
Parking and Accessibility Matters	William Hodge, Manager of Physical Plant and Security/Safety Extension 324, Room 101B Parking and Other
Tutoring Services	Michiko Weller, Coordinator of Academic Tutoring Services Extension 495, Room 406

Please note: When in doubt, please contact Clarence Whittaker, Dean of Student Services.

## **WHAT TYPES OF ACCESSIBILITY SERVICES ARE PROVIDED BY THE COLLEGE?**

Burlington County College meets the "Barrier Free" designation of the Easter Seal Society and complies with the provisions of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Specific services provided by the college include the following:

- . Barrier free buildings
- . Special registration if requested
- . Readers for visually impaired students
- . Test-taking assistance for visually and motor-skilled impaired individuals
- . Special parking facilities
- . Career Adaptive Learning Literacy Laboratory

## **WHAT DOES THE TERM "REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION" MEAN?**

Under the ADA, colleges must modify the physical and learning environment so that qualified individuals with disabilities are afforded equal opportunity. Such adjustments are termed "reasonable accommodations." Accommodations that would impose an undue hardship upon a college are not required.

"Undue hardship" is defined as an accommodation that would be unduly costly, extensive, substantial, or which would fundamentally alter the nature of the business of the college. However, in instances in which a particular accommodation would impose an undue hardship, the college must consider whether there are alternative accommodations that would not impose such undue hardship.

Under the ADA, exceptions to the undue hardship rule will be subject to very narrow interpretation, so refusal of accommodation on the basis of undue hardship should not be hastily made.

### **ARE DRUGS AND ALCOHOL COVERED BY THE ADA?**

Current users of illegal drugs are not protected by the ADA. However, if an individual is a recovering alcoholic or drug addict, the college cannot take action against the individual. Once such an individual enters a rehabilitation program and stops the current illegal use of drugs, she/he must be treated the same as any other individual with a disability. It should be noted that the college is not required to provide rehabilitation programs.

### **IS SMOKING COVERED BY THE ADA?**

The ADA permits colleges to implement restrictions on smoking or prohibit smoking.

Individuals with respiratory conditions or sensitivity to smoke may have disabilities protected by the ADA.

### **ARE INFECTIOUS DISEASES COVERED BY THE ADA?**

In general, infectious and communicable diseases are treated the same as any other disability under the provisions of the ADA. The college has the right to exclude an individual with a contagious disease if significant risk of substantial harm exists if the person were to be admitted to or retained by the college, assuming that no reasonable accommodation is available. However, the college may not exclude individuals on the basis of fears expressed by other individuals or stereotypical images of any particular disease.

### **ARE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES PERMITTED TO PARTICIPATE IN PROGRAMS?**

The ADA prohibits the college from excluding individuals with disabilities from participation in services, programs, and activities. Further, the college

has an obligation to ensure that individuals with disabilities have full access to all buildings and facilities in which activities are held. Thus, care and sensitivity should be exercised when planning field trips or arranging to conduct class or other activities at an off-campus site.

## **IN WHAT MANNER ARE SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED?**

Services should be provided in the most integrated setting appropriate to the needs of the individuals with disabilities.

The college should not make services or programs for disabled students separate or different from those provided to other students. Further, the college should not use standards, tests, or other criteria that have the effect of discriminating on the basis of disability. Additionally, the college cannot charge disabled students or individuals for the costs incurred in providing accessibility to its educational facilities.

Communications with individuals who have disabilities must be as effective as communications with others; this can be accomplished through the provision of interpreters, reading devices or readers, etc.

## **WHAT ADMISSION PROCEDURES SHOULD DISABLED STUDENTS FOLLOW?**

Disabled students are required to follow the same established admissions procedures as all other applicants.

However, before submitting formal applications, disabled students are encouraged to visit the campus and to contact the Director of Admissions and Enrollment Management to discuss any special needs. The Dean of Student Services will be provided with the names and special needs of any students who have disclosed this information to the Admissions office.

Applicants are not required to indicate any disabilities prior to being admitted to the college. After acceptance, disabled students are required to disclose this information only if they seek special accommodations.

## **HOW ARE FACULTY MEMBERS INFORMED OF THE SPECIAL NEEDS OF ANY DISABLED STUDENTS ASSIGNED TO THEIR CLASSES?**

The Dean of Student Services will inform individual faculty members of any special needs of any disabled students assigned to their classes as well as the types of services and accommodations which the college and the faculty member are to provide to meet those needs.

The Dean of Student Services will notify the Manager of Physical Plant Administration and Security/Safety of any physical plant, furniture, or other appropriate modifications that may be necessary to accommodate the disabled student.

## **WHAT SPECIFIC MECHANISM WILL BE UTILIZED TO NOTIFY COLLEGE FACULTY AND STAFF MEMBERS WHO HAVE A NEED TO KNOW CONCERNING THE REQUEST OF ACCOMMODATIONS OF ANY DISABLED STUDENT?**

The Dean of Student Services will notify faculty members of the special needs of any of their disabled students by formal letter. Copies of this letter will be provided to other college staff members who will provide assistance to the disabled student. A sample copy of this letter is included at the end of this section.



Date

Re: (Name of Student)  
Special Needs as a Disabled Student

Dear (Name of Faculty Member):

The purpose of this letter is to inform you that (name of student), a (name of major) major, is enrolled in your (name and section of course) course. (Name of student) is a disabled student and may require one or more academic adjustments, services, and accommodations while attending your class. As you know, under Federal legislation, including the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the college is required to make reasonable accommodation for disabled individuals. This student will require the following accommodations:

If you so desire, you may contact (name of student) by calling (her/him) at (telephone number of student).

Please contact my office if you have any questions or concerns regarding this matter.

Sincerely,

Clarence Whittaker  
Dean of Student Services

CC: Vice President of Academic Programs  
Assistant Dean of Academic Division  
Director of Physical Plant and Security/Safety  
Coordinator of Academic Tutoring  
Coordinator of Career Adaptive Learning Literacy Lab (CALL)  
Others as needed

COUNTY ROUTE 530  
PEMBERTON, NJ  
08068-1599  
609-894-9311

# MANAGING CUSTOMER CONCERNS

## CUSTOMER SERVICE SYSTEM

The Customer Service System is a key piece of the process. It is designed to provide a convenient and uniform method for recording customer complaints. The Customer Service System is a computer-based system which will replace the paper-pencil system currently employed in various ways throughout the College. Through its use we can compile data about our work processes and gain insights into the root causes of complaints. This in turn will help us develop intervention strategies which can be used to prevent complaints from occurring or reoccurring. The idea is to move from fire-fighting to fire-prevention. It is unproductive to invest time, energy and resources dealing with the same type of problem over and over again. Good prevention strategies free us to attend to new opportunities for growth and improvement not to mention all those things that got stuck in the "round-to-it" file.

It is imperative that everyone using the Customer Service System and particularly for those reviewing the data understand that the purpose is to continuously improve our work processes and not to evaluate people or performance. Research indicates that 85% to 95% of the sources of problems in the workplace can be assigned to elements of the processes that comprise our work. Only 5% to 15% are associated with people issues. With this in mind, we need to look at the complaints that surface in the Customer Service System as opportunities to improve our work processes so that we can meet or exceed the expectations of our constituencies.

The computer programming for the Customer Service System will be completed during the Spring 1994 Semester. Volume II of the Employee Development Series will be devoted to the Customer Service System and its use. Training sessions will be conducted for users prior to its implementation.

**Employee Development Series**

**Volume II**

***THE CUSTOMER SERVICE SYSTEM  
(CSS)***

**May 16 - 20, 1994**

**Presented by:**

**Curtis Cearfoss  
Donald White  
Sandra Young**



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Review of Key Definitions-----</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Sensitivity in Completing CSS Records-----</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Access to PRIME-----</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>BLACKSMITH Control Signals-----</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Where to Get Help-----</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Entry Help Sheet-----</b>	<b>Appendix</b>
<b>Program Screens-----</b>	<b>Handout</b>

Since it has been some time since we last studied "A Quality Improvement Customer Service Process," it will be useful to review some of the key points covered in the customer service workshops. Let's spend a few minutes reviewing the following terms used extensively in Volume I of the Employee Development Series.

### Customer

*Customers are the beneficiaries of a product or service and can be external or internal.* If you look at Burlington County College as a system, external and internal customers could be defined as follows:

#### External Customer

*External customers are receivers of the services of our system, e.g., students, the employers of those students, the four-year institutions the students may transfer to, County, State and Federal funding sources, taxpayers, etc.*

#### Internal Customer

*Internal customers are receivers of the services provided within the system: e.g., we are all customers of the payroll process. As employees within the system, we also have customers: e.g., if you are the employee responsible for ordering supplies requested through purchase requisitions, then we are all your customers. In reality, the College is a complex web of customer relationships, each one affecting the success of the institution as a whole.*

There are many definitions of the word customer. As long as we all understand the relationship between supplier and customer and are committed to providing the best possible service to our external and internal customers through continuous process improvement, then the specific words we use to define the word customer can be translated countless ways.

## **CUSTOMER SERVICE SYSTEM (CSS)**

*An OWNER is the first-line administrator in an OWNER AREA and is the individual empowered with the authority to make judgment decisions associated with his/her office without further approval by a superior and which may be of an exceptional nature. This empowerment can be traced to a Board Policy, Administrative Procedure or Executive-level decision which delegates and provides the parameters for this authority. OWNERS may open files in the Customer Service System and have the responsibility to respond to and close them in a timely fashion. In any instance where a complaint is unresolved by the original OWNER, the complaint is transferred to the next higher level of administration or designated executive officer. This hierarchical progression continues until a satisfactory remedy occurs or it reaches the President's office.*

**OWNERS ARE EMPLOYEES WHO HAVE THE AUTHORITY TO  
MAKE DECISIONS WHICH CAN RESOLVE A COMPLAINT.**

## **OWNER AREA**

An OWNER AREA is two things. First, it is a physical space. These spaces are typically defined as "Departments", "Divisions", "Office of the..." and the like. An organization chart would commonly reflect these spaces and their interrelationships. Second, it is where individuals charged with providing expert information and technical assistance are located. For our purposes the people aspect is far more important than the physical space. People who work in OWNER AREAS have general and specific responsibilities assigned to them which are usually spelled out in their job descriptions. Often inquiries are handled by staff in the OWNER AREAS without referral to or interaction with the OWNER. These individuals are likely to be the first to encounter a customer with a complaint. Consequently, OWNER area staff are most likely to be the individuals opening files in the Customer Service System.

## **PROCESS FLOW**

*The process flow is that part of the Customer Service System that describes how an inquiry or complaint moves through the organization. Our process utilizes the chain-of-command concept which reflects supervisor/subordinate relationships. This means that a complaint would move through our organization in concert with the prescribed supervisory relationship of one staff member to another and one office to another.*

### **THE OWNER MUST INSURE THAT EXPRESSED DISSATISFACTION IS RECORDED IN THE CUSTOMER SERVICE SYSTEM.**

All pertinent facts should be included as well as the decision of the OWNER. If the customer accepts the outcome, the file is closed. If the customer rejects the outcome, the file remains open and the OWNER transfers ownership to his/her supervisor. The transfer is accomplished through the Customer Service System, which may be supplemented by an in-person notification. The complaint will move through successive subordinate/supervisor transfers until the point that it would be transferred from an OWNER designated an Administrator in the College to a member of the Executive Staff or to the President of the College. The President will make the final internal decision on the matter. The outcome will be recorded in the Customer Service System and the file closed.

## **RECEIVER**

In its simplest form, a RECEIVER is any individual in the organization who is a recipient of a customer's inquiry. We are all RECEIVERS on a regular basis. It is a function of responding to questions asked of us. *The principal job of a RECEIVER is to get the inquiring party to the individual who has the information sought or the authority to grant a desired outcome, i.e., the OWNER AREA OR OWNER.* This is especially true if a customer is expressing dissatisfaction regarding a service provided by the College.

### **THE PRINCIPAL ROLE OF A RECEIVER IS TO MOVE THE INQUIRY TO THE OWNER.**

## USE SENSITIVITY WHEN WRITING CSS RECORDS

*It is essential when attempting to resolve a problem that every effort is made to do so in a sensitive and non-judgmental way.*

This applies to situations involving both external and internal customers, whether dealing with another person or office, or entering the situation into either the external or internal programs of CSS.

### *The External Customer Service Program*

When entering a situation about which an external customer has expressed dissatisfaction, it is our responsibility to complete the narrative section of the program in a sensitive and non-judgmental way. It is likely that at one time or another each of us will be the recipient of a complaint, justified or not. We can all agree that having a complaint lodged against us or our area is not something we particularly enjoy. Therefore, it is easy to understand how others might feel when we share information about a complaint directed to them.

Our role is to pass along the information from the external customer as explained to us. This does not mean that the information as related is a true representation of the situation; rather, it is information shared from someone else's viewpoint. So, when we complete the narrative portion of the CSS program, it is important to remember that as the person creating the record, it is our responsibility to express the concerns of the customer in a sensitive manner. It is not our job to conclude that another employee is wrong or even that the customer is presenting the situation in an accurate or fair way.

Therefore, please use descriptive words such as "the student *suggests*, *perceives*, *indicates*, *feels*, *implies*, etc." Do not use words that confirm a customer's accusations, such as "Mr. Ramsey never did call the student back as he promised." It would be better to say "The student *claims* that he never received a return call from Mr. Ramsey as expected."

## ***The Internal Customer Service Program***

The internal customer service program is designed to record problems in process that have eluded resolution through day-to-day, person-to-person contact. It is not meant to "tell" on a specific employee or group of employees. Each of us is charged with the responsibility of making every effort to attempt to resolve the problems in a work process that may be creating a dilemma for us before entering the situation into CSS. In fact, when entering the record into CSS, the program will require us to supply specific information about how we have attempted to resolve the problem informally.

Followers of the Total Quality Management philosophy assert that 85 percent of mistakes are caused by errors in the system or process; only 15 percent of errors result from individual performance. An example of this follows:

You are the employee responsible for processing institutional travel forms. This is a complicated procedure and you find that when the forms come to you they are usually not filled out correctly or completely. Each time this happens you contact the employee involved and try to explain what it is you need from him/her to gain the necessary approvals.

***Who is to blame in this situation? Is it the fault of the employee requesting overnight travel approval that he/she didn't complete the paperwork correctly? Or is there a problem in the process?***

In this particular case, the process was reviewed step-by-step. Employees from other areas involved were asked for input on how the process could be improved in order to make it work for everyone. As a result of this team approach, it was decided that specific and detailed instructions would be included with each travel form. To insure that everyone received a copy of the instructions, they were attached as part of a three-part NCR form. Once approvals are received, the pink copy of the form is now returned to the traveler with a cover letter explaining how to submit receipts for

reimbursement. After settlement is reached, the yellow copy of the form is returned to the processor of the forms in order to notify him/her that closure has been reached.

So even though completing approval forms for overnight travel still remains complex, everyone has clear direction on what to do to make the process work for them.

When entering information into the internal customer service system always use words that describe a problem in process. Before concluding the narrative portion of the record, read it back to yourself from the perspective of the employee receiving it to see if there are any wording changes that would more fairly describe the situation. The program will ask you for recommendations for improving the process, so be prepared with suggestions. Your input is valued.

## ACCESS TO PRIME

### *What do I do if I don't have a computer?*

Although it is a priority and a concerted effort is being made to provide a personal computer to all those with need, there are still employees who do not yet have a PC. Others may not require the use of a PC to successfully perform the functions of their jobs.

If you don't have a PC in which to enter a record into CSS, we suggest the following:

- . Ask a work partner or a secretary for a time when it would be convenient for you to use his/her PC
- . Arrange to use one of the two PC's available for this purpose located in the Computer Center

### *You must not gain entrance to PRIME through another employee's login.*

If a regular full or part-time employee asks permission to use your PC to enter a record into CSS, please try to be as accommodating as possible. However, it is imperative that you do not allow that person to access CSS through your login. The CSS program identifies the employee making the entry by accessing the login ID through PRIME. Therefore, all records of access to PRIME through your PC are tied to you personally.

### *How do I gain access to my supervisor's CSS program in the event he/she is away for an extended period of time, such as vacation or illness?*

It is the responsibility of the OWNER to notify the Computer Center that a particular employee reporting to his/her area is authorized to access the OWNER'S CSS program through the use of the employee's own login. This authorization can only be granted through a written request. The request should include the time period for which access is to be granted: e.g., beginning on \_\_\_\_\_ and ending on \_\_\_\_\_.



***What's the big deal -- can't I share my login with whomever I want?***

Allowing another employee access to your login is not permitted. Remember, PRIME identifies the person entering data into the system by login ID. The program cannot know that someone else is using your login; all entries are tied to you.

***What if I have a student worker or temp completing an assignment for me that requires that he/she perform the task using a PRIME program?***

Under **NO** circumstances are you permitted to share your personal password with another employee or anyone else. Should you make the decision to allow someone to work in PRIME gaining access through your personal password, you have compromised the security of PRIME. While you are actively operating in PRIME, anyone may enter any program to which you have access.

Many of us have legitimate authorized access to information through PRIME that is confidential and restricted. Access to these programs must be carefully guarded. An example of a potential problem follows:

You allow a student worker to post expenditure records to the budget posting screens in BLACKSMITH. This is an ongoing job, and the student spends most of his/her time posting entries. You know the student worker well, and you have every confidence in his/her integrity. It is annoying to stop what you are doing each time the student needs to use the PC, so you post a little sticky note to the computer with your PRIME access codes. This way the student worker can enter PRIME and begin work without interrupting you and can even proceed should you be out sick or on vacation.

Someone gains unauthorized access to the office after hours. He/she is familiar with computers and PRIME, and gains quick access to your PRIME menu by simply using the information taped to the PC. Your menu contains access to student records with phone numbers, addresses, grades, etc. Or, you have access to the PACT attendance record system, and the intruder can now access similar information

about any and all employees. The intruder doesn't even have to jot down the information -- you have made the work very easy -- he/she can just copy it right from your printer.

The list of possible security breaches is endless. The purpose of having an individual login and personal password is to protect the security of the system. Therefore....

*Do not post PRIME access information anywhere!*

*Do not write down your password -- choose one that has personal meaning to you so that you will remember it. Should you forget your password, after selecting another one, the computer center will assist you in activating the new password.*

*Do not allow student workers, temporary employees or anyone else access to PRIME through your login!*

*If it is deemed appropriate for anyone other than a regular full-time employee to use your PC to access PRIME, then this will be accomplished through use of his/her own LOGIN/PASSWORD formally assigned by written authority of an administrator (who then assumes responsibility for any resulting breach in security).*

It is also important to correctly logout of PRIME when you have finished using it. Otherwise, the program you are using may remain OPEN and the next person entering PRIME might find himself/herself in the middle of the last program you were using.

We cannot be too careful about protecting the security of the PRIME main frame computer system. It is each employee's personal responsibility to keep confidential access codes to PRIME confidential.

*Do I enter a record into the external CSS while the customer is present?*

CSS is a tool designed to be used internally to collect important data about how customer complaints are responded to and to find ways of improving the work processes in order to prevent the same complaints from reoccurring.

We ask that you do not enter a record into CSS while talking to a customer for a number of reasons. First, it is distracting. It is important to pay close attention to what the customer is saying. A form for jotting down key information such as name, telephone number, Social Security number, etc. has been provided to you. Please make use of it when talking to the customer, rather than entering the problem directly into CSS. Second, records in CSS are meant for internal use and should not be copied to customers.

Please remember that the customer always has the option of putting his/her complaint in writing. In this way the customer can keep a copy of the complaint for his/her own records.

## BLACKSMITH CONTROL SIGNALS

- ? An explanation of the expected response will be displayed.
- ^ The previous prompt is repeated if logical.
- The entry of a blank (SPACE BAR by itself) causes the data currently stored in the field for which you are being prompted to be deleted. If a blank is entered in the controlling field of a list type field, then all associated data for that line or column are deleted.
- EXIT You will proceed to the next record. Information in memory related to the current record is cleared. If you are in the process of updating a record, the record will be restored to its original condition.
- QUIT The current program will be terminated. If you are in the process of updating a record, the record will be restored to its original condition.
- REFRESH Used to repaint a BLACKSMITH screen after receiving a PRIMOS message or other non-BLACKSMITH information.
- NEXT Used to assign the next available sequential ID to a new record in a BLACKSMITH ENTRY screen.
- LOOKUP Used to initiate the BLACKSMITH function of retrieving records by data not found in the primary key.

### FUNCTION KEYS:

F 5 = LOOKUP

F 8 = TEXT FIELD EXIT

F11 = EXIT THE RECORD (without saving changes)

F12 = QUIT THE PROGRAM (without saving changes)

# **STOP!**

Before you enter an internal record into CSS

***Have you made every attempt to resolve  
this problem in process before entering it  
into CSS?***

Have you discussed the problem with your supervisor?

**Personal issues do not belong in CSS.  
The system is designed to promote the  
resolution of ongoing problems in  
process.**

**STOP!**

Before you enter an external record into CSS

***Are you the OWNER of this student  
problem?***

Is your area the OWNER AREA?

If you are the RECEIVER only, then it is your responsibility to put  
this customer in touch with the OWNER or OWNER AREA

**REMEMBER -- ONLY USE CSS IF  
THE PROBLEM BELONGS TO YOU!**

***Who is the OWNER of CSS?***

The Research and Planning Department holds responsibility for maintaining the Customer Service System (CSS). A statistician within that department will collect data from the recording system and share it with the appropriate areas at regular intervals, probably at the end of the fall and spring semesters.

***When do I begin using CSS?***

Once you have completed the hands-on CSS training, you should immediately begin to enter records into the system.

***To whom do I direct questions I may have about the Customer Service Process?***

If you have questions or need clarification about the Customer Service Process, feel free to call Curt Cearfoss or Sandy Young. If you have questions about use of the program, please direct these questions to Curt or Sandy also; you should not call Donald White in the Computer Center.

Once a complete transfer of CSS is made to the Research and Planning Department, all questions about CSS will be directed there. This transfer of responsibility will take place August 1, 1994.

***When will the first real set of data be available?***

The summer months will be used to iron out all the wrinkles in the CSS program. This is the time for you to ask any questions you may have about using the system. The first real set of data will be shared at the end of the Fall 1994 semester.

*If there is a change in personnel or the reporting structure in my area, with whom do I share this information?*

Please take the time to share any personnel changes or changes in responsibilities in writing to Alice Fagans. A short note to Alice will suffice; if she needs clarification she will contact you.



Track # \_\_\_\_\_

**2 Date Received:** \_\_\_\_\_

Phone 1: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone 2: \_\_\_\_\_

**Subject:** \_\_\_\_\_

[illegible]

Lined paper template with horizontal ruling lines.

# NOTES

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## QUESTIONS

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## DOODLE AREA

